Statement by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on Bahrain

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made today the following statement:

"I am deeply concerned by the situation in Bahrain. I have called the Foreign Minister to express my views directly, and to underline once again that there is no alternative to dialogue. The Government must do all it can to initiate a political process with concrete steps that answers the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Bahrainis. This is the only way forward to restore lasting stability and security. I have repeatedly urged all sides to enter into a meaningful dialogue without delay and without preconditions.

I reiterate my call on all sides to exercise the maximum restraint. According to many reports, the use of force by security personnel has been continuous. Several people have died and there have been many injured. I regret the violence and this loss of life and, on behalf of the EU, present my condolences to the families of all the victims. The human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Bahrain’s people must be respected.

As I have stressed to Foreign Minister Al Khalifa, dialogue must replace violence now."

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P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - Michael.Mann@ec.europa.eu
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu
COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu
www.eeas.europa.eu